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PRESS RELEASE FROM
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CHAIRMAN
FOREIGN RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON U.S. SECURITY AGREEMENTS AND
COMMITMENTS ABROAD

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Now that United States involvement in the Indochina war has been terminated and 1973 has been declared to be the "Year of Europe", the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad decided that it would be timely to provide the Committee on Foreign Relations with first-hand information on several pressing issues involving United States security commitments in Europe.

Accordingly, the staff of the Subcommittee, Messrs. James G. Lowenstein and Richard M. Moose, were directed to go to Europe in September, 1973 in order to look into three important issues of concern to the United States and its European allies; namely (1) negotiations through which the United States is seeking financial support from the allies to offset the budgetary and balance of payments costs arising from the stationing of troops in Europe; (2) the development of the Allied position in the Mutual Balance Force Reduction negotiations; and (3) the deployment of nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

The report which the Subcommittee staff prepared on these three subjects would appear more timely than expected some months ago.

The relationship of the United States with its European allies is presently under greater stress than at any time in the recent past.

Serious questions are currently being raised about the future viability of the NATO alliance at a time when the United States is concurrently asking its allies to assume a larger measure of responsibility for our military expenditures in Europe and to maintain a coordinated alliance position in negotiations with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact concerning future military force levels in Central Europe.

Recently we have been through the experience of seeing United States nuclear forces in Europe and the rest of the world placed on alert in response to Soviet moves in the Middle East -- apparently with little notice to our allies.

Until this report was prepared, the information available to the Congress on these issues had been both limited and fragmentary, despite extensive debate in the Senate on the cost of the United States troop commitment to Europe and passage of legislation that links United States force levels to allied financial support.

Although the Executive Branch had briefed the Committee on Foreign Relations on the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction negotiations, the information provided was of a very general nature. It did not convey a sense of the feeling of our allies with regard to these negotiations. Furthermore, at no time in the past has this Committee been given any comprehensive picture of our nuclear deployments in Europe or of the agreements by which those deployments are maintained.

With the publication of this report, the Congress and the public will finally have available at least some of those facts so necessary if informed judgments are to be made regarding the policy issues involved.

We regret that this report has been heavily censored by the Executive Branch. Nevertheless it represents a significant step forward in breaking down arbitrary barriers to information heretofore applied.

Of the three subjects discussed in this report, that portion which deals with United States nuclear weapons in Europe is to us the most significant. In this connection, in his October 25 press conference about Middle East developments, Secretary of State Kissinger pointed up once and for all this significance when he said:

"We possess -- each of us -- nuclear arsenals capable of annihilating humanity. We -- both of us -- have a special duty to see to it that confrontations are kept within bounds that do not threaten civilized life . . . It is easy to start confrontations, but in this age we have to know where we will be at the end and not only what pose we strike at the beginning."

Any informed person, in any country, must fully share the Secretary's sober view of this matter, but let us point out another important aspect.

While the leaders of the Executive Branch undoubtedly knew our position at the beginning of the confrontation in the Middle East, the Congress and the American people heretofore have known virtually nothing of our day to day nuclear posture in Europe -- a posture which involves thousands of nuclear weapons and extraordinarily intricate arrangements involving the armed forces of virtually all of our NATO allies.

With the premise of the stakes described by Dr. Kissinger, there is no justification for keeping the truth about this segment of our national defense from the American public; in fact, if leaders of our Government expect to establish public support for their policies it is vital that from here on they share with the public more of the facts upon which those policies turn.

Let us hope that the publication of this report is but a forerunner of more information -- leading to more understanding -- so that there will be a factual basis for public knowledge and discussion of current issues in United States-European relations.

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